

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-16 EUR-25 EA-11 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00

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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6996

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 3699

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU
SUBJECT: MAY 30-31 ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE MAY 30-31 ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING FAILED TO PRODUCE A DEFINITIVE STATEMENT ON THE QUESTION OF CGIL ADMISSION TO THE ETUC. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ADOPTED A STRONG POSITION ON CHILE, A REPORT PLEDGING ICFTU SUPPORT FOR PORTUGUESE TRADE UNIONS AND A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR WITHOLDING INVESTMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE BOARD ALSO CALLED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STANDING ICFTU-WCL COMMITTEE TO WORK FOR UNIFICATION OF THE TWO INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATIONS. JOHN VANDERVEKEN OF THE BELGIAN FGFB WAS ELECTED ICFTU ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY TO FILL THE VACANCY LEFT BY HERIBERT MAIER. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD FAILED TO ADOPT AN OFFICIAL POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF CGIL ADMISSION TO THE ICFTU. THE BOARD DECIDED INSTEAD TO INFORM THE ETUC THAT THE ICFTU REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLE OF FREE TRADE UNIONISM AND THAT "SOME" ICFTU AFFILIATED UNIONS ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH THE POSSIBLE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF PERMITTING A COMMUNIST DOMINATED ORGANIZATION TO AFFILIATE WITH A DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION GROUP. IT IS GENERALLY ASSUMED HERE THAT ALTHOUGH THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD TOOK NO DEFINITE STAND ON THE ISSUE, THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WILL VOTE TO ADMIT THE CGIL WHEN IT MEETS ON JULY 9. (HOWEVER, THE DGB AND THE FO ARE STILL HOPEFUL THEY CAN PREVENT CGIL BACKERS FROM OBTAINING THE TWO THIRDS MAJORITY WHICH IS REQUIRED.)

3. ACCORDING TO RELIABLE ICFTU SOURCES, LEADERS OF ASIAN, LATIN AMERICAN AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIAL ORGANIZATIONS JOINED THE FRENCH FO, GERMAN DGB AND ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY KERSTEN IN OPPOSITION TO CGIL MEMBERSHIP IN THE ETUC. ITALIAN CISL LEADER STORTI WAS THE STANDEST ADVOCATE FOR A FAVORABLE ICFTU POSITION ON THE QUESTION. BELGIAN FGFB LEADER DEBUNNE MADE THE MOTION TO LEAVE THE MATTER UP TO THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE MOTION WAS SUPPORTED BY MOST EUROPEAN BOARD MEMBERS ON THE BASIS THAT IT IS A EUROPEAN QUESTION. THIS AVOIDED A ROLL CALL VOTE WHICH WOULD HAVE PROBABLY BEEN AGAINST CGIL ENTRY AND COULD HAVE CAUSED SERIOUS DIVISIONS WITHIN THE ICFTU.

4. AT A MAY 31 PRESS CONFERENCE KERSTEN EXPRESSED ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD SATISFACTION WITH AN ILO PROPOSAL TO SEND A FACT FINDING MISSION TO

CHILE. KERSTEN DESCRIBED THE SITUATION IN CHILE AS "VERY GLOOMY". HE CALIMED THAT OUT OF 15,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS EXECUTED BY THE MILITARY REGIME, 5000 WERE TRADE UNIONISTS. HE ANNOUNCED THAT THE ICFTU IS PROVIDING SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE FAMILIES OF TRADE UNIONISTS EXECUTED AND STILL IN JAIL. THE MISSION LABOR ATTACHE SAW A "WORKING DOCUMENT" CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD WHICH INDICATED THAT AN INITIAL \$1,000 HAS BEEN SENT TO SANTIAGO FOR THE COMMITTEE OF COOPERATION FOR PEACH THROUGH BISHOP ARISTA. ICFTU SOURCES TOLD US THAT THE ICFTU WILL ADOPT A HARD LINE ON CHILE AT THE ILO CONFERENCE IN JUNE.

5. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ADOPTED A RESOLUTION DEPLORING CONDITIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND IN OTHER AFRICAN COLONIES. THE RESOLUTION CALLS UPON ICFTU AFFILITATES TO EXERT PRESSURES ON THIER EMPLOYERS' PARENT COMPANIES TO ELIMINATE ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BLACK WORKERS AND TO MAKE EFFORTS TO BLOCK NEW INVESTMENTS IN ANY AFRICAN COUNTRY WHERE TRADE UNION FREEDOMS ARE NOT RESPECTED. KERSTEN SAID THAT A WHITE PAPER LISTING ALL FOREIGN-OWNED COMPANIES IN SOUTH AFRICA IS BEING PREPARED TO FACILITATE SUCH ACTIONS.

6. KERSTEN REPORTED THAT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD VOTED TO GIVE FINANCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGUESE UNIONS. HE DESCRIBED THE RECENT ICFTU MISSION TO LISBON AND A MEETING WITH GOP PRESIDENT SPINOLA AS POSITIVE. HE SAID SPINOLA TOLD THE ICFTU LEADERS THAT HE, SPINOLA, WAS IN FAVOR OF "ONLY DEMOCRATIC SOLUTIONS."

ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE ICFTU DELEGATION TO PROTUGAL RECENTLY TOLD US THAT SPINOLA WAS NON-COMMITTAL, THAT THE TRADE UNION SITUATION IN PORTUGAL WAS GRAVE AND THAT IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO COMMIT ICFTU FUNDS AT THIS TIME.) IRVING BROWN, THE AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE, SUGGESTED TO SOME ICFTU LEADERS, IN ATTENDANCE AT A MAY 30 HISTADRUT RECEPTION IN BRUSSELS, THAT THERE MIGHT BE SOME POSSIBILITY FOR DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONS TO WORK WITH THE UNIONS OF

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RAILROAD WORKERS AND OFFICE EMPLOYEES IN PORTUGAL.

7. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ALSO URGED THE EARLY FORMATION OF A STANDING COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE ICFTU AND THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (WCL) TO ASSURE CLOSER COLLABORATION AND TO WORK TOWARD EVENTUAL UNIFICATION OF THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS. THIS WAS PROPOSED BY THE ICFTU SECRETARIAT LAST FALL. KERSTEN TOLD NEWSMEN THAT HE HAS BEEN ASSURED BY WCL GENERAL SECRETARY BRUCK THAT THE WCL EXECUTIVE BOARD WILL ADOPT A SIMILAR POSITION WHEN IT MEETS AFTER THE SUMMER VACATION BREAK.

8. JAN VANDERVEKEN OF THE BELGIAN FGFB WAS UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE ICFTU. VANDERVEKEN HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE ICFTU STAFF AT GENEVA UNTIL NOW. THIS POSITION HAS BEEN VACANT SINCE LAST FALL WHEN HEIBERT MAIER RESIGNED TO

BECOME SECRETARY. GENERAL OF THE SECRETARIAT OF OFFICE AND
TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES.
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Message Attributes

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